

The STRANGE CASE of JULIA CRAIG

by Nard Jones
Copyright NEA 1936

BEGIN HERE, TODAY
JULIA CRAIG, pretty young woman, is ambitious to become a night club singer. Julia lives in an apartment with AMY SANDERS.
PETER KEMP, young lawyer, is in love with Julia but they quarrel and Julia declares she never wants to see him again.
Woodford gives a party aboard his yacht and asks Julia to come to sing for his guests, including CYNTHIA LEE, dancer; MRS. JOSEPH, widow; HUGO NASH, and ROYAL NESBITT.
On board the yacht, Julia discovers the others think she is Woodford's guest and also that the trip is to be much longer than a week-end. The yacht lands at Evergreen Island where Woodford has a lodge.
Julia leaves the others and sets out to explore the place. Suddenly she hears a man's voice.
NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY CHAPTER X

STARTLED at the tall figure before her on the path, Julia stepped back.
"Please don't run," the pleasant voice went on. "Stay and let me introduce myself—and apologize for frightening you. I'm Tom Payson."
"Oh . . ." breathed Julia, as if his name explained everything—which it did not. "I—I thought there was no one on Evergreen Island except Mr. Woodford and his party."
"And you," laughed Payson, "are one of his party, I take it?"
Julia nodded. "I'm Julia Craig."

He came closer, studying her face in the semi-darkness. "The fact is, you know, I was just as scared as you were. I didn't know Woodford was at his lodge, and I'd been told that all ghosts wear white. But not so charmingly, I'm sure." He took a match from his hiking trousers and re-lighted his pipe. In the sudden glare his features were handsome and clear-cut. He raised his eyes to her in the bright yellow light. "Cigarette?"

"No, thanks . . . I'm still curious, though. Are you camping on the island as a friend of Mr. Woodford's?"
"No to both those guesses. I know Woodford only through hearsay—and my camp is on the next island over. I came across in a little rowboat hitched to an outboard motor. I think I've tramped over every square foot of my island—so I thought I'd see what this one was like." He laughed. "I was just about to conclude it was just like mine. But now I've changed my mind. Why don't you let me take you back to Woodford's lodge? I don't like to trespass and then sneak away, you know."

"I—I wish you wouldn't take me to the lodge," said Julia suddenly.
"Oh! . . . Do you mind telling me why?"

Confused at her own impulsive words, and at Payson's question, Julia sought her mind for an answer. "I—I'm not sure, but— She stopped, facing him, and began again. "I might as well tell you the truth if I want you to help me."

"You might as well," Payson agreed.
"You see, I didn't want to come here in the first place. I thought they were out for only a week-end trip—then they came up here, and I'm afraid they're going to stay a while."

PAYSON nodded slowly. "In other words, it looks as if you'd been both shanghaied and kidnapped. Is that it?"

"As far as I'm concerned," said Julia, "it amounts to that. I know it sounds silly, but—"
"It doesn't sound silly to me," Payson assured her. "But I wish you'd tell me what they are, Woodford, of course, but who else?"

Julia named Woodford's guests. Payson tapped out the ashes of his pipe, carefully pushed dirt over them with the toe of his boot. "I know it's none of my business," he said, "but now did a sensible girl like you manage to get in over her head this way?"

Briefly Julia told him how she had come to accept George Woodford's invitation on the Wood Nymph. She had hardly finished when Payson broke in. "You know," he said, "I think I know more about Woodford than you do, even if you've worked for him. Pretty office girls are safe enough with the Woodfords as long as they don't let it out that they have ambitions. A girl who wants something—badly—is considered fair game, you know."

"I didn't know," Julia admitted. "I'd better be getting back to the lodge before they send someone out. I wanted you to know, just in case."

"But look here," Payson said. "My camp's across the inlet. I won't be within calling distance. And I want to help you." He thought a moment. "There's a small settlement down about 20 miles. A fellow down there has orders to come back and get me in another 10 days. If only I could get word to him he might get us out of here tomorrow."

"But how would I explain that? I mean, it would look foolish if I just ran away."

"WELL," went on Payson thoughtfully. "I could have this boat fellow pretend that a wire had come for you at the settlement. He could say someone was ill in town and you had to get back immediately." "But how will you get in touch with him?"

"There's only one possible way. The yacht has a radio-telephone aboard, doesn't it?"
"Yes, but the captain told me that nothing could go out on it without Woodford's approval." "We'll have to try it somehow," Payson told her.
Julia put a hand on his arm. "But you'll get into trouble. I don't want anything like that to happen."

Julia had never known such relief as she experienced on the way back to the lodge. She wondered what she would have done if she hadn't met Tom Payson.
at once understanding and content. A man willing to help her yet knowing nothing of her except the story she had told him.
"He shouldn't do it," she whispered to herself. "He—"

She turned back on the path, started toward the water again. Then, softly and unmistakably she heard the chugging of the outboard motor on his boat. It was too late to reach him now.

As she reached the porch of the lodge she saw the glow of a cigarette. It was Cynthia Lee, and the dancer regarded Julia with unfriendly interest.

"So you took a run-out powder on the party?"
"I—I had a little headache," lied Julia lamely. "I hope I'm not late for dinner."
"Dinner!" The Lee girl laughed cynically. "They've forgotten all about dinner. I think they decided to have only liquid nourishment tonight." She pointed to a tray of sandwiches on the porch table. "I argued Obo out of these. Help yourself."

Julia took one, listening to the sounds of mixed laughter inside the lodge. She returned slowly to Cynthia. "I suppose I'm just a dub . . . but I don't like people when they've had too much to drink."
"Neither do I," answered Cynthia, "unless I've had too much myself. And then the way I feel the next day spoils whatever fun I thought I'd had the night before."

Julia looked at her curiously. "You don't seem to be having much fun. Why'd you come along?"

"I always give straight answers—I came along because I'm in love with Royal Nesbitt."

Julia could think of no adequate comment, and Cynthia laughed. "A good honest answer does one, doesn't it? That's queer when you stop to think about it. But I've seen it happen thousands of times. If we were all absolutely truthful when we answered questions there'd be only about half as much conversation."

She looked through the wide window to where Nesbitt, Woodford, and Hugo Nash were gathered around Mrs. Joseph. Involuntarily, Julia followed her gaze, saw the widow drape an arm familiarly around Royal Nesbitt's shoulder.

"She's crazy about him, too," Cynthia said lightly. "She pretends it's Nash. But she's alone, too, because Royal came."

Julia was about to reply when she was startled by a noise below them on the path. Turning, she saw two of the yacht's crew coming up the path holding Tom Payson firmly between them. As they brought him onto the porch and shoved him through the open doorway of the lodge her eyes met Payson's for one brief second.

She caught his unspoken warning not to recognize him before the others.

(To Be Continued)

BONANZA

BONANZA, Oregon—Bonanza Grange No. 772 will initiate in the first and second degree on Friday evening, Feb. 7, at 8 p. m. in the high school gymnasium. Hildebrand Grange will join with Bonanza in this initiation. Several of our county and state officers are expected to be present. All county grangers are cordially invited to attend.

Harry Nichols, manager of the Big Springs service station, received the sad news of his youngest brother's death in Washington.

The Girls' league of Bonanza high school gave a miscellaneous shower at the high school Monday afternoon in honor of Gladys Meyer Rogers, who was recently married. She received many lovely as well as useful gifts.

Mr. and Mrs. Chester Evers, accompanied by Mr. Slack took Mrs. Slack into the doctor late Monday evening. Mrs. Slack has been ill for several days.

Bonanza Grange will give a leap year dance Feb. 29 at Bonanza high school gym. Further details will be announced by radio, through the newspapers, and by posters.

Mrs. Ada Parsons Sparreton left Klamath Falls Saturday for San Diego, where she will join her son, Cyril Parsons. She expects to remain in the south for about two months.

Flapper Fannie Says



A bone of contention provides meat for argument.

OUT OUR WAY

BY J. R. WILLIAMS



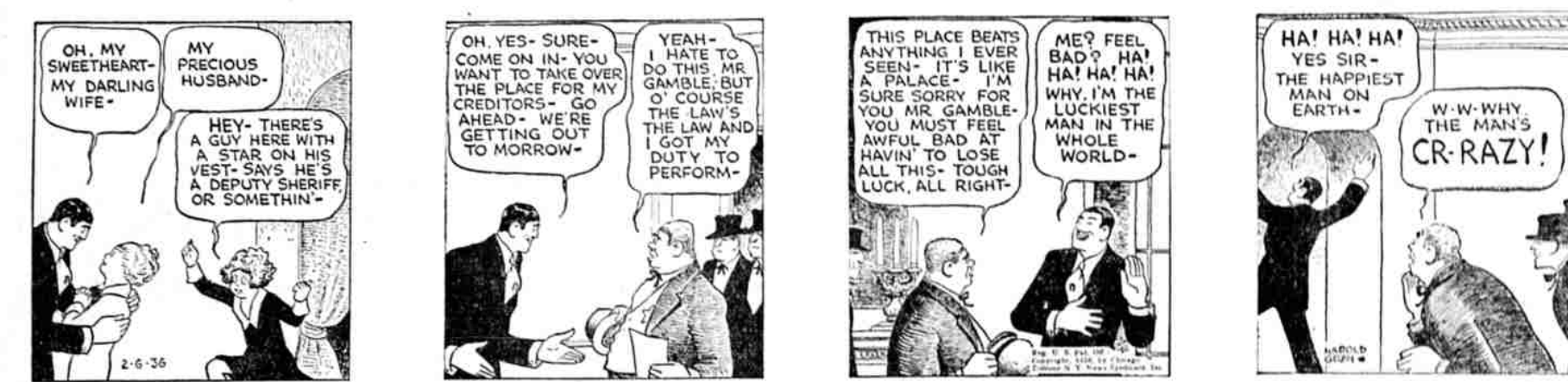
OUR BOARDING HOUSE

BY AHERN



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE

BY HAROLD GRAY



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS

BY BLOSSER



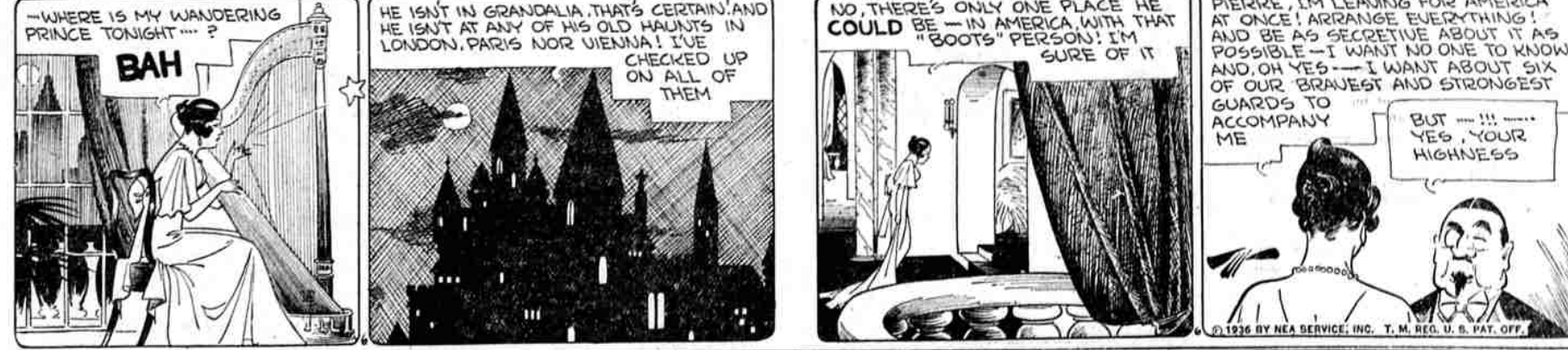
WASH TUBBS

BY CRANE



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

BY MARTIN



THE NEWFANGLES — MOM'N POP

BY COWAN

